

## **Project Summary**

Provide a summary (one-page maximum) that describes key elements of the project and states the total project cost.

Please type here: The Sierra County Land Trust, a non-profit and tax exempt 501(c) 3 organization, is applying for a Proposition 84 Strategic Opportunity Grant 2 for \$44,500 to contract for appraisals on six properties (625 acres) in the Sierra Buttes/Gold Lakes Basin Special Treatment Area of Sierra County. We are proud that the Sierra County Board of Supervisors will be our co-applicant. The intent is to complete a package of appraisals on parcels with willing sellers so that we can complete sales negotiations and be ready to apply for acquisition funds from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy this fall as well as from other grant programs in the near future. There is an urgency to this application because we would like to complete the field work for the appraisals before the snow flies while the parcels are still accessible.

The main goal of our organization is to preserve land for water quality and open space protection specifically in the Sierra Buttes/ Lakes Basin of Sierra County. The Sierra Buttes/ Lakes Basin, with its craggy, snow covered peaks and multitude of sub-alpine lakes, is recognized as one of the most compelling visual features of the northern Sierra Nevada. However, the Buttes and the Basin are also a critical contributor to the Yuba River watershed, making up a significant portion of the flow of the North Fork of the Yuba River which forms a border of the Basin. Locally, groundwater fed by the snow fields of the Buttes supply the Basin and Sierra City water supplies, accessed by a series of ditches and water storage tunnels that date to the gold mining days.

There are currently only approximately 3000 acres of private land left in the Basin. We are in escrow or in negotiations on approximately 900 acres of land to be purchased with a \$5.6 million Sierra Nevada Cascade Conservation Grant which we partnered with the High Sierra Rural Alliance to receive last year. The remaining private parcels total approximately 50, with 35 separate property owners. We are in contact with these property owners and, over time, we expect many of them to take advantage of preserving their properties in perpetuity through the Land Trust.

We are a new land trust with a modest budget. We do not have funds available to pay for appraisals. Since appraisals must be done in advance of grant award under the new Proposition 84 grant guidelines as well as for other grant programs, funds for these appraisals would be invaluable to us. Landowners in our area are reticent to pay for appraisals themselves since whether or when we will receive acquisition grants is speculative.

To ensure that funds are not wasted on uncertain purchases, we have secured willing seller letters from each of the owners of parcels to be appraised. The parcels are all critical to water quality protection of the alpine lakes in the area as well as a number of streams and the North Fork of the Yuba River.

